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ABSTRACT

This speech suggests how teachers' involvement may stimulate Catholic school educational support for child care via recruitment committees. The success of one such committee in Omaha, Nebraska is documented. Suggestions include but are not limited to recruiting involved parish members; planning the committee's activities; organizing monthly meetings; taking action toward meeting the needs of working mothers and single-parent families; conforming to state regulations in arranging child care; implementing a child care curriculum; hiring a nurturing, trained staff; devising a method to share child care duties with parents; and surveying school constituent interest in child care. (JAM)

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YOU CAN EXPAND WITH EASE IF YOU DELEGATE AND SUPPORT

National Catholic Educational Association 86th Annual Convention,
Exposition and Religious Education Congress
March 29, 1989 Chicago, IL

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Y O U C A N E X P A N D W I T H E A S E I F Y O U D E L E G A T E A N D S U P P O R T

Chicago, 1989 NCEA

Not only is Catholic education a gift to the nation and realistically, a gift to the church, but in the 80's, it CAN BE a special gift to families.....single parent families and working mothers, especially.

You wouldn't be here today if you weren't in some way interested in going the extra miles for God's little ones...and at the same time, boosting your school's recruitment, or possibly, just servicing your teachers. (After all, we all know that the fixed costs -- the heat, maintenance, salaries, etc. are outgoing monthly, whether we have eight or fourteen or thirty children in a classroom.) If we can register five or ten more in a grade, we are basically money ahead. And...that isn't saying anything as to how a plus in enrollment enhances our image in the parish community or in the city or town.

Your first step might be a <u>recruitment committee</u>...if you are interested in uping enrollment but not adding programs. If you have a development director/consultant, he/she has probably already suggested this. If not, let me briefly tell you an easy way to set this up because it is for the principal to oversee and direct, not manage.

(HANDOUT ON RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE SO NEED NOT TAKE NOTES.)

In organizing your recruitment committee, you will want to

do three things: set up committee of doers; plan the year's activities; have monthly meetings.

RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE (10-12 persons)

1. Invite doers (action people) with credibility (well thought of), accountability (get the work done), and sociability (likeable).

   a. different regions of the parish
   b. mixed ages
   c. with children presently enrolled or graduates

   NO DEAD WOOD OR ANYONE WITH AN AXE TO GRIND!

2. Plan the year's activities

   a. monthly meeting - constant affirmation
   b. cull Baptism lists and invite parents to come hear your story.
   c. invite them to CSW program and reception.
   d. home gatherings
   e. follow-up (notes and phone calls)

3. Meeting (monthly)

   a. agenda (principal sets the agenda to keep control)
   b. elect officers (president and secretary). They do the work, not you.
   c. assignments

This committee is working twenty-four hours a day in the trenches (with new neighbors, in grocery stores, libraries, beauty parlors, etc.) Never underestimate the fact that a neighborhood beautician knows more about your school than most of your staff. Across the back fence or in the shopping mall, these committee members are most valuable.

Our success story: we went from twenty-four to sixty + in kindergarten in three years.

(SLIDES BEGIN AND ARE SHOWN THROUGHOUT THE REST OF PRESENTATION)

Let me set the scene: this is our Cathedral elementary school across the street from the magnificent church. It is eighty-two years old. We have gone from fourteen hundred children to three hundred and eighty-five. You can see that we had to MOVE to survive.

Our boost in enrollment came as a bonus. We were actually trying to service our community in four ways. A boost in enrollment was the by-product. The four ways?

1. pre-school
2. day care
3. extended care
4. summer school

The Bishop's pastoral letter in 1985, on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy directs us to move -- take action toward meeting the needs of our working mothers and single parent families. Let me quote:

> "For those children whose parents do work outside the home, there is a serious shortage of affordable, quality day care. Employers, governments and private agencies need to improve both the availability and quality of child care services."
>
> October 1985 - National Conference of Catholic Bishops

Principals, board members, and steering committees know how hard we work to hire the BEST teachers. But only principals understand what we go through to train them, to bring them up the way we want them.

At our Cathedral, we wholeheartedly rejoice when one of our young teachers begins raising a family, but at the same time, we want to retain them.

So our day care was really a selfish benefit.

We strongly feel that helping teachers provide excellence in child care will keep them in the classroom -- our classrooms.

Shifting gears again, as a mother, (How many of you are parents?) ...as a mother I would have to say...children are our most precious possessions, aren't they? Knowing this, as an administrator, I have to believe that when teachers are free from worry about their own children's well being and growth, only then can they devote their energies, concerns, and vitality to teaching. Now...that doesn't mean I think the school should be #1. I do not! Children are our first priority and I would be the first to send a teacher home if her little one was very ill. In fact, I have been known to desert the office a time or two myself -- to deliver a sport coat to Prep... or car keys to the med center.

We sincerely felt that opening a day care, primarily for the children of our teachers, with extra slots for parishioners, would improve morale, give us positive public relations, and couldn't help but be a recruiting tool.

We ALL know that when the report cards on day care are in... most of the grades border the F line. (Slides shown on Fortune, early in '87, Time in summer of '87, and New York article on Professor Zigler of Yale on Schools of the 21st Century with day cares.)

This article in Fortune magazine tells us that the main con-

cern in the executive suites is "What are we going to do about child care to cut employee absenteeism?" High paid executives are out because children are sick. Time gives us a grim report on the quality of day care centers in the country and the concern of parents. Yale professor, Edward Zigler, one of the most "influential researchers in the field of early-childhood development" has unveiled a plan for the "school of the 21st century" that features a professionally run child-care system serving children between the ages of three and twelve.

If you have an extra room or two, a basement level apartment, empty convent, or house across the street, a day care is possible. It is not only possible, it's probably a splendid idea. It will be a service to your own teachers, parish, and community, and a recruitment aid eventually. Once parents get children established, they are not likely to take them out and relocate them.

Is this a job for the principal? NO. If you're like I am, you have no training in early childhood. (I'm a secondary English teacher without even training at the primary level. I was horrified at the thought of going into the baby sitting business and frankly, dragged my feet...thinking:

THERE ARE DAYS WHEN WE FEEL LIKE THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ARE SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES. We are called upon to do everything from marriage counseling to delousing the children, aren't we? But it wasn't long before I could see that there is no better way than in day care to assist the family. It was also an opportunity to encourage parental participation in children's religious development.

It took us 10 years to get it in gear. I let it simmer on the

back, back burner for years. Yes, I knew it could be a money maker and a recruitment tool.

Then a faculty member approached me about opening day care and I could see the need was great within our own staff family. Three of our teachers were expecting babies that school year. Four had babies this past school year!

It took us a year to plan and organize the day care...and I cannot overemphasize the importance of detailed planning. It is crucial--considering the transitions and competition in the day care business today. Don't be in a hurry.

We felt, that practicality dictated, that the initial project be started on a small solid base in order to ensure the development of a competent program. We strongly felt that if it was going to be a part of our program of excellence, it must meet the highest standards. Such a beginning would help us establish a favorable reputation and create a demand for quality child care in the Catholic parish facility. And that was our goal....quality, NOT quantity.

So a faculty committee was formed. Their first concern was finding a qualified and enthusiastic director. The committee spent months looking into selecting the best possible person. We looked at parishioners running their own day cares and at our own baby sitters. Unanimously, we selected a pearl of great price. She just gave a session on day care. Significantly, as a mother, her own product stole the show, so to speak. She has three adorable daughters in our junior high, middle, and primary grades. When observing what a marvelous job she had done with her own children -- we knew that we had found our director.

The committee continued with setting up the program throughout the year. (Notice that that was NOT the principal's job. Incidentally, smart principals are the ones who delegate. They're the ones without bleeding ulcers.) This committee collected toys, furniture, made curtains, painted, etc. and all the time generated enthusiasm for the project. But in all fairness, it is the director who is solely responsible for the success of the program. We are now in our third expansion in four years.

(HANDOUT ON ADMINISTRATOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES SO NEED NOT TAKE NOTES.)

WHAT WOULD BE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DAY CARE ADMINISTRATOR? Little things like <u>state</u> <u>regulations</u> concerning: staff qualifications,
written discipline code
program
nutrition
infant care (1:4) or 12
child health
safety
facility (35 sq. ft.)
transportation
sanitation reg. (1:15)
fire safety requirements
licensing statute

Briefly, how would you go about this?

1. Contact state and local regulatory agencies (health and fire department, state licensing, child care food program, etc.)
2. Plan, equip, and maintain environment while considering available space, needed equipment, supplies, and cost factors. (Manpower and resources may include working with

paid and volunteer maintenance and reaching out for donated items.)

3. Define and implement the overall program:
   a. policy of enrollment
   b. hours you will be in operation
   c. attendance
   d. fees
   e. philosophy
4. Plan and implement a daily program which includes: routine schedule, group curriculum and individual development, and encouraging the physical, social-emotional, cognitive, and creative-spiritual aspects of each child. Keep records (observations and developmental charts). Provide for quiet time and active play, indoor and outdoor activities, meals, and rest.
5. Devise a method of sharing the process of care with the parents through open, non-critical communication and respect. Records are kept of daily care, medications administered, injuries, etc. Menus, curriculum plans, school events, etc. should be posted on parent bulletin boards.
6. Prepare and operate within a budget.
7. Recruit and hire loving, nurturing, trained, qualified staff, who meet licensing requirements and support them financially, including benefits.
8. Evaluate, plan and implement growth.

Pre-school was our next step. Parents want their children exposed to learning situations earlier in their lives. They will find them too. Catholic schools, if they have the room, might as well get in on meeting the demand because it is lucrative as well

as beneficial recruitment-wise.

In 1984 the Census Bureau reported that mothers of approximately 26.5 million children work outside of home and 64% of these work full time. Because there has been a vast reduction both in the quantity and quality of time parents have available for their children, they are looking toward pre-school programs to provide a supplement to their child's social-emotional, physical, and intellectual development.

What do parents consider when selecting a pre-school?

curriculum and environment
behavior management
teacher qualifications
parental involvement

We have a three-step program for four and five year olds. We are not involving the three year olds at all because we want it to be a pre-school and not a playtime setup. Opening a program for just three year olds would be ideal if you have the personnel and the room. We have a two-morning and a three-morning program for the children who are at least four. Then we have a five afternoon pre-kindergarten for four or five year olds who are not yet ready for kindergarten.

We hired a full time certified teacher. Why? Because putting a professional on the staff lessened the concern and work of the administrator! But you need not be that selfish! It would be financially productive to hire a non-certified person.

You must write your own program....unless there is a suitable one on the market now. Our primary teachers worked with the new

teacher to develop a unique program. I wanted to make sure it did not infringe on the kindergarten program in any way. That is key. The last thing you want is to put the kindergarten teacher's nose out of joint. Just opening the pre-school program and devoting your time, attention and publicity to that corner will be an adjustment for the kindergarten staff.

Utilize your special area teachers....music and physical education. That gives the program great credibility and demand.

We have discovered that the pre-kindergarten program is an asset to the school program. It is very true that some five year olds are not ready for kindergarten...kindergarten in the 80's that is! Our main objective is to foster the child's natural desire to learn. This can be accomplished by creating a learning environment designed specifically to meet the learning styles of young children.

WHAT ARE THE FIRST STEPS YOU TAKE WHEN CONSIDERING OPENING A PRE-SCHOOL?

Research must be started on the possibility of opening a pre-school. There are pertinent questions you must ask and answer:

(HANDOUT ON PRE-SCHOOL SO NEED NOT TAKE NOTES.)

1. For whom are you opening pre-school? You must establish the age. Is it for children entering kindergarten in the fall of 1991?

2. What are your objectives? (Ours are pretty general.)
   a. To augment the child's knowledge of God. (Religious formation can be an essential component in early childhood education.)
   b. To encourage development of the child's abilities.

c. To aid the child in relating/taking part in group activities.

d. To stimulate the child intellectually.

e. To encourage and provide opportunities for creativity and self-expression. You want to stimulate and enhance creative and imaginative development for each child.

f. To provide a positive atmosphere through which each child can learn to love and enjoy school.

3. Do you have adequate facilities? (We had a spacious and inviting setting. The pre-school sessions are housed in a wing specifically designed for the 3-5 age group. Facilities also include private bathrooms and outdoor play area.)

4. Whom would your staff include? (Principal, teacher, gym specialist, music specialist, and librarian.)

5. What would your teaching methods include? You want to keep in mind that the work of Piaget, Erikson, and others show that young children learn in a holistic fashion. They acquire knowledge through play activities which allow them to interact with objects, events, people, in their environment. Our job is to foster their natural desire to learn.

   The experts also tell us that highly structured readiness activities are developmentally inappropriate for most children. Back to the teaching methods now and what they would include:

   a. An atmosphere of warmth and concern.

   b. Time for creative play.

   c. Directed group projects.

   d. Literature activities.

   e. Musical experiences.

f. Developmental art experiences.

g. Creative dramatics.

h. Physical education.

i. Program organized around planned units.

j. Puzzles and games designed to develop coordination and perception.

k. Some kindergarten readiness activities.

6. What types of classes will you offer? Will you want two-day and three-day or will you prefer five day pre-school?

7. What will your rates be? This must be discussed with your Board of Education and your Finance Board/Committee. (Our 1988-89 rates are $40 a month for the two-day; $55 for the three-day; and $25 a week for the five afternoon pre-kindergarten.)

8. What are you looking at for the overall cost?
   a. teacher's salary
   b. $2000-$5000 for supplies
   c. $2000 for playground materials

9. Survey your publics to see if there is an interest. (Handout available on that survey.)

Another step is extended care. With 65% of our families being one parent families or where both parents are working, we <u>are</u> called upon to come to their aid. We have had an early morning extended care program for 11 years. Parents working from 7:00 A.M. until 4:30 P.M. or on the 8:00 A.M. - 5:30 P.M. shift drop children as early as 6:45 A.M. (Now, the secret of a smoothly running

program is WHO runs it!) From the administrator's view point, that is crucial. You principals aren't going to run it and you don't want to have to worry about it. Neither do you want to have it interfering with your other programs, scouts, sports, etc. One of the safest, preventative steps is to find teachers interested in extra income to run it. That way you will eliminate most of the staff complaints, lock in parental confidence, and virtually be able to give them the run of the place. That option is important to them. If they want to use the VCR in the library for a movie on a rainy day, they should be able to. If they want the kitchen to make cookies in for another group...let them know they are welcome. The facilities should be theirs for the asking. If a staff members is running the program, that should eliminate any concern on your part.

How do you set up an extended care program? CAREFULLY! (HANDOUT AVAILABLE ON SETTING UP EXTENDED CARE SO NO NEED TO TAKE NOTES.)

1. You must first survey to determine if there is an interest. (That should be a letter composed by the principal stating WHY you are considering such a program (service to working parents), WHERE it will be held and HOW MUCH it is going to cost.

2. Get your active committee in gear and working with your recruitment committee. (A word about the active committee composition: get teachers if you can. They already have the fringe benefits like insurance. They have the credibility and the health checks will be nothing.)

a. You might want to use guilds, sodalities, Home & School Associations, or parents' groups to help gather furniture, games, toys, etc.

b. Be inventive -- use Action Editor in your local daily, a radio ad, etc. Even a feature story in the Catholic newspaper ending with a plea for toys, etc. will do it.

3. Establish your Extended Care Home Center and have that be an easily accessible room for parents to get to. (Remember they are as tired as you are at the end of the day and their day as interested, protective, fulfilling parents is just beginning! Some day, someone might canonize a working mother for that very reason!)

4. Prepare a brochure (HANDOUT) and let it double as a registration with a down payment of even $10. It's a commitment and you need that.

5. Elicit the cooperation of the rest of the staff.

6. Get your public relations in gear -- full force. That includes the parish bulletin, Catholic paper, newspaper, etc. Positive public relations is a must.

7. Work on the organization:
   a. Observe successful programs in other schools, etc.
   b. Talk about the +'s and the pitfalls.
   c. Plan the program on paper.

8. Outline the program.
   a. When will it run?
      1) School days only? That's not practical for

working parents.

2) Remember that extended care is a recruitment tool -- run it as often as possible.

3) Snow days?

b. Have convenient but practical hours. We have a two-level -- mini and maxi care program.

1) The mini structured program is in the morning. There is no snack or organized play so it is cheaper.

2) The maxi care in the afternoons consists of intricate planning and supervision including:

a) snack time, outdoor play, quiet time, homework time, TV or movie time. Our charge is $1.25 an hour. The secret of success -- it has to be fun! You have to be creative and lenient.

b) Bookkeeping, billing, health and fire inspections are handled by the director/administrator, not the principal.

My director runs it but touches base with me on changes (snacks, field trips, communications, problems, etc.)

c) Interestingly, we did not pick up any latch-key children, not even one. (No tuition grants are given either as people are very reluctant to give money to pay for baby sitters.)

c. WHERE will it be held? (You need that "home base", colorfully decorated with curtains, play house, donated furniture, etc. Centers of interest must be set up within. We also utilize our mini gym and library. Remember....use every resource you have. You want the children to LIKE it....or they won't be back.)

d. Activities? In the mornings we have quiet games, homework, "Sesame Street", and breakfast for which they pay if they desire it. I do take them over to breakfast and supervise that.

In the afternoons we have:

1) snack
2) play time and games
3) structured activities
4) homework and quiet time

e. Record keeping: (administrator of the program.)

1) charges
2) billing
3) late charges

f. Salaries: $6 an hour.

g. Registration information:

1) family information
2) person to call if parents were not available
3) physician's name and number
4) any medical restrictions
5) normal departure time

Our summer school program has been in operation for sixteen years. Again, this is added income for teachers who want to teach one, two, or three hours in the mornings for five or six weeks. We started our summer program so our children would go to summer school. We advertised it as "At St. Cecilia's, the SMART kids go to summer school." Now, if you are going to do that, you will have to shake the bushes the first summer and recruit the above average children. Well thought of, and respected teachers can do that for you. They can easily motivate children who like them.

We solicit tuition grants to help those who can't afford it. The children wear play clothes and love the diversion. We offer remedial courses as well as enrichment. A sample of offerings would be reading and math from grade 1 through grade 8, German or French, drama, physical education, arts & crafts, and computer. We have also added pre-school to the program two years ago and had our largest enrollment in that area.

New students from other parts of the city enroll for a higher tuition and sometimes stay. Whereas it is our policy not to recruit from another Catholic school, children from the public schools enroll, make new friends and many times ask their parents to transfer them. At the least....we are advertising our school.

But the important by-product of summer school is the fact that in addition to lessening the loss of the children's retention/learning over the summer, we've solicited new support and appreciation from parents. (Incidentally, we work around the cleaning crews.) I have a handout for you...the flier on our summer school.

We're in the inner-city...or midtown of Omaha. Parents move into our Cathedral parish, not the suburbs, <u>because</u> of our programs. They value the quality school, are proud of the flag, but they <u>treasure</u> the day care and extended care programs.

Now, let's look at the financial figures for just a minute, before I close and answer any questions you might have. I've already told you we charge from $40 a month to $25 a week for the pre-school. With forty-two children, that brings in almost $22,000 a year. The salary for the certified teacher is $12,000. That's a profit of $10,000 for just that one program. The day care probably will clear about $27,000 this year. Extended care brings in another $9,000. It all helps pay the rest of the salaries.

It's time I quit talking. Let me close with the thought that we have all been given the <u>gift</u> of teaching. Let's give it our best. The Lord knows we aren't in it for any other reason than to do His work. Good luck to you in your endeavors. You will find our address on most of the handouts. Don't hesitate to call or write (including a self-addressed stamped envelope) if I can be of help to you.

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